

PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee Bob Stump, Chairman

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CONTACT

Ryan Vaart

Meghan Wedd

(202) 225-2539

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BOB STUMP HEARING ON THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY BUDGET

Today the committee meets to review the Department of the Navy's budget request for fiscal year 2002.

The proposed Navy and Marine Corps budget represents an increase of \$6 billion to cover pay raises, enhanced housing opportunities for military families, and an increase in the Navy's operations and maintenance account.

I commend the Navy and Marine Corps leadership for recognizing the need for additional resources. Unfortunately, even with these increases, serious problems will persist.

For example the Navy's budget request provides for the construction of only six ships. However, the Navy must build eight to ten ships a year in order to recapitalize the current fleet of approximately 316 ships. The proposed budget also requests only 88 aircraft, although 180 to 210 aircraft per year are needed to maintain current levels. And although the Marine Corps has consistently stated a need for a minimum of \$1.2 billion annually in ground equipment procurement in order to sustain the existing force, this year's budget requests only \$982 million for Marine Corps ground procurement.

I understand Secretary Rumsfeld's desire not to prejudice the pending Quadrennial Defense Review by making significant changes to the modernization program in fiscal year 2002. Even so, a single year's budget will not solve all of the Navy's readiness, modernization, and quality of life shortfalls. Although additional funding is required for the Navy and Marine Corps to "get whole," this year's budget request is a positive, strong step in the right direction.

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